

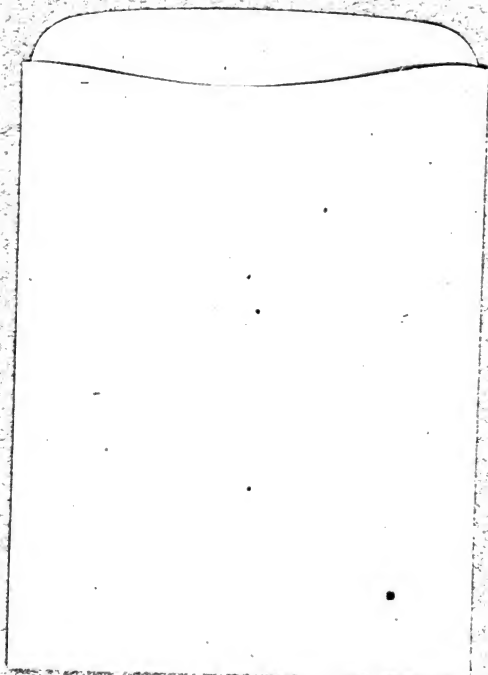
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JONES, Ernest.

Evenings with the people.

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EVENINGS WITH THE PEOPLE.

THE FRANCHISE AND TAXATION,

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

ERNEST JONES,

OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE, BARRISTER AT LAW,—AUTHOR OF

“THE BATTLE DAY,”—“THE EMPEROR’S VIGIL,”—&c.,

AT

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EVENINGS WITH THE PEOPLE.

THE FRANCHISE AND TAXATION.

On three previous occasions I have assailed the oppressive institutions of our country. I have brought before you the tyranny of capital over labour, in my lecture on the Workman and his Work; I have shown you the crimes and monopoly of the Hereditary Landed Aristocracy in my second address. In my third I have shown you an exposure of the Established Church, and as, I venture to say, in the mere weight of crushing facts, without the slightest merit of my own, had never till then been held before the world! Those three field days of ours have been three victories, each more important than the last. The first, elicited the notice of nearly the entire Press, and the marked approbation of most, while the organs of aristocracy and monopoly wrote fiery leaders, not to impugn my arguments or facts, but to abuse me in the abstract. My second address was met by comparative silence—there were reports, a few or no comments. Counter argument was hushed. My third address won the victory of silence and the honour of omission from every one of the organs of Class-rule. Why was this? Was it because my statements were proven incorrect—my facts false? Not one has even been answered. Was it because my audience grew smaller? It has grown larger each successive evening. No! it is because my facts are too true—because my audience is too great—because my cause is too dangerous, that the cold scabbard of silence is placed around the blunted weapon of the Press. But, sirs! I never throw a word away; I never speak, save when I know where I find an echo. If every paper in England were silent to-morrow, it would not interrupt

one syllable of my words, or take one listener from my audience. I have a Press of my own. Before the great organs of class-rule are eloquent in print to-morrow, the words I shall have spoken to-night will be rushing along every railroad in the kingdom—in numbers that, I venture to assert, throw the issue of Printing House Square itself into the shade. I say this without boasting—I say it to show the world, the Press, and you, that there is a power in motion, no silence can stifle and no conspiracy arrest. There is something formidable in this thirst for knowledge, in the immense sale of these poor pamphlets. I have struck the rock of truth in the desert—with a mere willow wand, I grant you, and lo! the myriads come round to slake their mighty thirst. My audience is England, not Saint Martin's Hall. The pen of history shall record the words, the ephemeral broadsheets of a day refuse to chronicle; and, sure as these seeds of truth go scattered broadcast through the land, a harvest shall ripen from that seed-time such as people never reaped before. These white-winged messengers of progress are gathering a greater host than ever yet was summoned by the fiery cross; coming in numbers to that silent muster-call, such as never trumpet or drum of tyranny have marshalled. These are the recruiting sergeants I send out, who call you to the battle for yourselves, not to the war for others.

But what are those three pictures of wrong and suffering I have held before you on three previous evenings? Mere ornaments to hang along the walls of memory? Scenes of man's great agony to deck a pannel, or adorn an album? It is not for that I have come hither!

Sirs! I do not merely paint the crucifixion, but I strive to liberate the Christ. It is therefore I stand to-night before this great assembly.

I have told you the poverty of the people is caused by the monopoly of the sources of employment. But how will you destroy that monopoly? I have told you your surplus labour, low wages and dear food are caused by the monopoly of the land. But how will you destroy that monopoly? I have told you that priests plunder you, landlords starve you, capitalists crush you, and you have a right to say to me: "We feel it and we know it—tell us something more, tell us how to prevent it, and you will tell us something new—then we will listen."

If so, listen now. I will advert to

I.—THE IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL POWER.

The evils complained of exist, because there is a greater monopoly than all of them, greater than the monopoly of the Church—greater than the monopoly of land, credit or capital, it is the monopoly of political power, which regulates and protects every other monopoly of society. Few of you are aware of the force of political power. You see but the effect—and too often you mistake the effect for the cause, and try to remove the latter by struggling against the former. Therefore it is, that you indulge in social efforts instead of striking at the political monopoly, which course is the only possible cure of crime and misery now left us. History smiles or weeps as she sees the fatal blunder. It is the thing you see not—but the things you see not are greater than the things you see; for God, the invisible Almighty, to thought, the invisible architect of human glory; to life, the invisible strength within your veins.

If there is something wrong in a community, either man or nature must be the cause.

If there is poverty, it must be either that nature causes dearth—or man, monopoly.

In the former case, there is no cure; in the latter, the cure is in man's hands.

There is poverty in England—fearful poverty. There are wailing children, starving men, oppressed millions. Labour is cheap and food dear; myriads cannot find employment; millions more are only half employed, and one third too little food is produced for the population.

Is this nature's fault?

Nature has spread around us seventy-seven million acres of land, of which little more than half is under cultivation, and of which not more than one tenth is incapable of profitable culture.

Nature has placed on that land eight and twenty millions of human beings—of whom only

800,000 men and boys are allowed to cultivate that half.

If you allow eleven million acres for uncultivable soil, there are eleven acres of good land for every one of six million families, and 30,000 families stand on it and say to the millions: "Starve!"

Why is this? What causes it?

Nature, then, is guiltless. Who then, the criminal? If nature has given plenty, must be man's fault if he does not enjoy it. We do not starve by the laws of nature, we starve by the laws of man. The guilt then among ourselves.

But which part of the nation is the guilty?

That which makes the laws, not that which has but to obey the laws that others made.

The bound captive is not responsible for the captor's acts.

Such is the cause of this waste and ruin of the land.

It is the law that does it.

It is not earthquake or comet, thunderstorm or inundation, but man—man in his worst capacity, his vilest class—a House of Lords, a Star Chamber, an Hereditary Landed Aristocracy. If the landless made the laws instead of the landed, where then would be the monopoly of the latter? Political power is at the root of it.

Thus much for the apportionment of the source of wealth. Now for the wealth apportioned from that source.

There are, as I have shown, less than 800,000 labourers (including boys and old men), who produce all the agricultural wealth of Great Britain. These, as I have also shown, receive an average of less than fifteen pounds per annum each. Thirty thousand landlords receive more than 100,000,000 pounds a year in rental of their lands, forests and manors. Including mines, fisheries, &c., they receive £50,000,000 more. But taking the first sum only, if 30,000 landlords were not in existence, 800,000 labourers might receive that 100,000,000 pounds—which would give an annual income of one hundred and twenty-five pounds for each agricultural labourer—man and boy; add to this the fifteen pounds they have, and they arrive at the sum of £140 per annum, without touching one farthing of the farmer's profits.

Treasure that fact and store it well. If it were not for 30,000 landlords, 800,000 labourers might receive 140% per annum, instead of 1% only.

What is the cause of this? Law-making. Who make the laws? The landlords. Do you think—if the labourers made the laws instead of the landlords—do you think they would fare any better? Political power is at the root of all.

Hypocritical or foolish nobles go about talking ameliorating the condition of the agricultural labourer, telling them that God has ordained we should be rich and poor, and babbling about removing some of their evils! Let them move themselves—that is the first step towards the labourer's relief.

Sirs! I take another instance—the poor-sims. I have shown you why there are paupers. Now, what pays for them? A rate levied on industry. But why should the shopkeeper or working man have to pay poor-sims-rate? In the same way in which you have paupers because you have peers, in the same way you have poor-sims-rates, because you have parsons. Tithes, "temporalities," and charities were allotted to support the poor, but a State Church caste steps in and intercepts that support. What are the poor-sims-rates in the highest years? Three millions sterling. What do the parsons take in the best years? Eleven millions sterling. Then here were no State Church you would have no poor-sims-rates, and eight millions sterling besides to put in your own pockets. I repeat, in the same way in which the peer makes the pauper, the parson makes the poor-sims-rate. What is the use of this? Law-making. Because the parson makes the laws—bishops sway in Parliament, and the black sheep of every landed family invest the sins of their youth in the established Church. Political power is at the root of all.

Sirs! the royal family alone receive as much in an ordinary year as all the paupers of Great Britain put together! The palaces cost more than all the workhouses, and if there were no royalty in England there need not be one shilling spent in poor-sims-rate. The royal forests could employ every pauper! the royal palaces could house a large percentage, and the royal revenue would give them all a maintenance. Shopkeepers and working men, you see what I pay for your whistle, yet you cannot pipe to your own tune. You see how one institution after another lives upon your life, and holds itself by legislative monopoly. Political power is at the root of all.

I mention these instances merely as samples. Do not suppose, from dwelling so much on the bad, that I am blind to the importance of commerce and manufacture, and the evils of over-manufacturing and commercial system. On the contrary, I can trace the same causes and the same effects through the frame of our trading community. But I mention these cases to show you the importance of political power. Those who make and administer the laws of a country, make the destinies of its people. They generally regulate the people's life—their health—their virtue—every condition of their existence.

Given: a fair land and genial sky, given: an industrious population, all the rest is but a problem of human institutions.

On those depends, whether the people shall rise to happiness or sink to misery. Political power is at the root of all.

Having thus shown the importance of political power, let us now examine on what foundation that power should be erected.

II. THE BASIS OF POLITICAL POWER.

1. PROPERTY.—Some persons of property say that property should be the basis of the franchise. That I deny; for, if you carry out that argument, he who has double property should have double votes. But even supposing property to be a rightful basis for the franchise, even in that case every man should have a vote, for every man has got a body: he is himself the most valuable property of creation! a nation's most valuable property is the nation itself. Talk of property, of land, or house—of engine, or of tissue! Show me a piece of machinery, show me a clod of earth, show me a bale of goods, of equal value to this hand. Then for that property I demand the vote.

Again, a country is the property of a people,—not the people the property of the country, and, therefore, every permanent resident in a country has a right to a voice in it, which is merely the right of looking after that which belongs to himself.

2. TAXATION.—Some persons say that representation should be based on taxation—that every man who pays taxes should have a vote. Such was the theory of the Whigs. I repudiate that basis also! for, if you carry out that thesis, it implies that he who pays twice as much in taxes as another should have two votes. The best title to the franchise is existence. Every man should have a vote, the same as every man has got a life to look after. Crime alone forfeiting the right, or idiotcy holding it in abeyance. Have I an interest in the country? Yes! I have the interest of my own existence; then I ought to have a voice to plead for it. However, I'll take them at their word. They say taxation and representation should go hand in hand. So be it. But then, according to their own showing, every man who has no vote at present ought to have one, and nine tenths of those who have a vote ought not to have it.

Who provide the taxes? The producing classes. I defy you to show me one shilling provided by any man who is not a producer. None but the working man provides the tax. The Duke of Devonshire and Baron Rothschild never provided one farthing of taxation in their lives. You cannot pay taxes out of nothing—if

you produce nothing, you supply nothing; and neither Baron Rothschild nor the Duke of Devonshire ever produced one doit in the whole course of their existence. The landlord and the usurer, the employer and the fundholder, pay the tax, I grant you. They are the paymasters, I admit, in the same way in which the paymaster of a regiment pays the men. But it is not the paymaster who provides the money. The landlords or factory lords pay a tax. What do they pay it out of? Their income. What do they get their income out of? The rental of their land or the profit on their goods. Who pays the rental—what makes the profit? The farmer, and the sale of the goods. Whence does the farmer get the money? From the produce of the farm. Who produces it? The labourer. Who makes the goods? The operative. Take away the labourer and the operative, and neither the farmer, landlord, nor factory-owner would have one shilling in the world, or be able to pay one farthing of taxation.

All taxation is therefore a per-centage of the profit made on the producer's labour, and, therefore taxation falls on the producer. The income tax is no exception. There can hardly be a greater fallacy than to suppose that an income tax, however graduated, rests on the rich. It is the poor who supply it, and the poorer you are the more you supply, in proportion, of the rich man's tax. Suppose a merchant is assessed 1s. 6d. in the pound for income; how does he act? He adds so much in the pound to the price of his goods, or takes so much off the shilling in the wages of his workmen. The poor being comparatively the largest purchasers in the country, are thus mulcted in the largest portion of the tax. But I will also show you that the remaining portion also is derived from them. You may say the rich have to pay that added price on what they buy as well. Aye! but as their income is dipped into, how do they act? They retrench. They put down a horse or dismiss a servant; eat less sugar, or drink less tea—in other words, give less employment; so that the producers, who are the poor have to find in reality every farthing of the tax after all. The tax collector may not knock at the workman's door, for the simple reason that perhaps he has no door to knock at—but the employer knocks at his pocket, nevertheless! He may not pull the money out of his purse, for the simple reason that the employer stops it before it can get in. But he supplies it all the same. Nay; an increase in taxation is actually used as an excuse for a decrease in wages. I have known employers who have reduced the wages of their workpeople on the plea of the income tax, and cleared under that pretence about two hundred times more than the tax they had to pay.

I grant you that taxation, in settling down

from the shoulders of the rich on to the heart of the poor, may disarrange society, and make many suffer. Yes! others suffer, who do not actually provide the tax. The poor, hard working and industrious clerk or shopman may feel painfully drained out of his £100 per annum. His family may go without money or comfort, his sick wife with many a requisite for health—for life itself. He buys fewer necessaries—and tho' the poor ultimately are the chief sufferers, he suffers too the transit of that class-taxation-curse from rich above to the poor below.

The shopkeeper also is a heavy sufferer. He tries to recover the loss by adding to the price of his goods, he restricts his market. The great merchants or manufacturers can add to price with comparative impunity—for a trifle on the pound produces much to them, and having comparative monopoly of supply, they can, to a great extent, command the market. Not so with the retail shopkeeper. He sells less as he charges more; and pauperism increases from the very fact of an increase in taxation. For him, the candle burns at both ends: he has to pay more with the one hand, while he has to take less with the other. His custom grows smaller, as his taxation grows larger. It is therefore that, if they understood it rightly, the interests of the shopkeeper and workingman are so much identified.

Talk of a graduated income-tax: graduated as you will—the rich escape taxation altogether—it falls alone upon the poor. The clerk and shopkeeper begin to feel its weight—it grates them and bruises them in passing, and then falls crushing on the workingman below.

If taxation, then, is to be a basis of representation, on that very ground I claim most representation for those who are represented least and not at all—and, on that very ground, if a class ought to be beyond the pale of the franchise (which none ought to be,) that is the class of the aristocracy and capitalists of England. If the claim taxation as a basis for the franchise, that they themselves should be the very class to be franchised.

3, PRODUCTION.—What basis then remains for the franchise? Next to existence, the only title to the franchise, is contribution to the country's wealth. He who by hand or brain adds to the riches of a country has the right to a voice in saying how the riches shall be invested, defended, administered. It is, again, merely the right of looking after your own property. By that test again, those who now have the most of electoral power, ought to have no electoral power at all. The operative and laborer, the clerk and shopman, the farmer and shopkeeper, the schoolmaster and physician, the artist and author, all contribute to the mental

aterial riches of a state : but the great land-
 r and fundholder, the lords of acres and bank-
 s, contribute nothing—absolutely nothing.
 CIRCULATION.—They excuse their exist-
 on the plea of spending money. As
 h the same money would not be spent,
 ey existed not! As though money spend-
 were a laborious and beneficent pro-
 on. If such drones and idlers were not there,
 ould have the money they now hold, and
 l be spending it ourselves, for our own ad-
 ge. All men belong to the distributing
 for all men buy and most men sell. But
 e who sell also, as well as buy, are the only
 esome distributing class of society. He who
 er produces nor sells, that is : exchanges
 h for wealth, is a clog on society and a
 rance to progress. He who only exchanges
 representative of wealth, money—for real
 th, is a robber living upon robbery from his
 labours.

word more as to the circulation of money.
 k! a million per annum distributed through
 00 hands, is far more beneficially spent than
 ough the hands of ten persons. For in the latter
 , the money is so spent as to draw up the
 ulation in great, unhealthy, festering heaps,
 , force it into artificial and injurious occupa-
 is, that cripple production and create surplus
 r; in the latter case, the money is evenly
 lated through the country, distributing
 eral employment, causing the population to
 equally spread along the face of the land,
 acting as a stimulus to the production of
 l, and all salutary occupations. There is the
 t, the vital, the inconceivably important dif-
 ference, between the centralisation and the
 usion of the income of a country.

III.—THE BASIS OF TAXATION.

Sirs, having adverted to the basis of political
 ver, in other words, the means of forming a
 ernment, we will next advert to the basis of
 ation,—in other words, the means for carrying
 it government on.

I here assert that, even as production should
 be the basis of legislation, so property—real
 erty, not income, should be the basis of
 ation.

There are very absurd notions in existence as
 regards taxation. Taxation is simply a transfer
 money from the hands of one set of people, to
 e hands of another. It would not matter one
 ta to the great mass of the people, what the
 ount of taxes was, provided the money thus
 ised were spent in the same way in which it
 ould have been spent, had it never passed
 ough the hands of government at all; that
 , providing the money, coming from the pro-

ducer, flowed back to the producer, promoting
 the same occupations, and as fully as it would
 have done, had it never parted from its owner in
 the payment of a tax. But the way in which
 taxation becomes ruinous to the masses of a
 country, or to particular classes, is when it acts
 as a hindrance to some individual trade or
 special interest, or diverts capital and labor from
 salutary and requisite investments. Take an
 example : a high tax on cotton would ruin our
 commerce, by crippling our competitive power in
 the world's market. There is a tax which would
 be destructive to the people. Take another : the
 national debt created a system of taxation that
 diverted capital and labor from their suitable and
 natural investments. By the funded system
 that arose with the national debt, numbers of
 people who would otherwise have been farmers
 and shopkeepers, laborers and artisans, suddenly
 by reckless, feverish speculation, became
 capitalists—deriving six and twenty millions
 annually from the state. All these men were at
 once turned into consumers only, and ceased to
 be producers—and their luxury soon drew thou-
 sands, millions, more, from productive labor into
 mere unproductive occupations. With the
 national debt the palatial suburbs rose around
 London : every brick of those houses was taken
 from the cottages of labor in the country ; the
 towns grew large and the villages became small ;
 the industry of England was diverted into fatal
 channels ; from that hour the decay of the working
 classes became rapid ; and though every shilling of
 that six and twenty millions were spent within
 the country, that money so spent is a barrier in
 the way of wealth and happiness ; England would
 be richer, if it were cast into the sea—for it is
 the golden bait that draws labor from salutary
 avocations to suicidal agency.

And why is this unequal distribution, this
 ruinous direction of taxation ? Because of class-
 laws. If the producers of wealth, the real tax-
 payers, had the vote, and made the laws, taxation
 would be far otherwise adjusted. Political power
 is at the root of all.

So long as property alone makes laws, property
 will throw the burden of taxation on industry.

Let industry make laws, and it will throw the
 burden of taxation on property—and there it
 ought to rest.

Had you a people's parliament, one single ses-
 sion, one single act, one single law—might relieve
 you for ever from poor-rate, taxation, and
 surplus labor, but safe and gradual provisions for
 the purpose.

Sirs, you pay 50 millions a year for taxes—
 the aristocracy get 100 millions a year for rent :
 make the land national property, let the rent
 be paid to the nation, not to the 30,000 stum-
 bling blocks, called landlords, you need not pay

pay a single farthing of taxation, but would have, besides, a surplus of 50 millions per annum in your coffers. Pay rent for the land? Pay rent for the elements? You might as well pay rent for the wind that blows across the mountain tops, the water that gushes from the springs pure lips, or the light that falls from the broad glory of the sun. Away with the landed aristocracy, and you will no more be robbed by customs and excise, by income-tax or assessments; the trammels fall from commerce—then only, would trade be made free and food cheap, and the government inquisitor would no longer pry into your homes.

Sirs, you pay eleven millions per annum to a state church. Away with the State Church—let its stolen property be applied to the relief of the poor, and not a farthing of poor-rate need be paid for ever after.

Sirs, you have half the land lying uncultivated, and as a consequence, low wages, dear food, and surplus labor. Apply half the landlord's rent, and half the state church income towards locating the surplus labor on the surplus land, and England would produce food enough for her children, and find work enough for her inhabitants. You produce only one third too little food, and you have one half of your land still to produce that failing third. The "Morning Post" taunted me the other day by saying it would cost more than I thought, to locate a million farmers on our waste lands—it said, this would require 40 millions per annum for ten years. Well, then, take only half the rent of the landlords and half the plunder of the parsons, and you have 56,000,000*l.* per annum to do it with—or sixteen millions more than the "Post" says is required—besides paying every shilling of poor-rate and taxation, and saving millions per annum in the collection of the taxes, in coast-guards, and innumerable other expenses.

Such are the resources of England—such is the effect that a just use of political power would produce. Do you fear to use it? What have you to fear? Whom would you hurt? Thirty thousand landlords and eighteen thousand parsons, at the most—forty-eight thousand idlers. Sirs! aristocracy killed fifty thousand working men in one year's war in the Crimea, and at the worst, you would only turn fifty thousand idlers into workingmen. But, they might receive compensation for a while to break their fall, till they learnt to support themselves and do something for a living. Make the land national property—let rent and tithes be paid to the state, instead of to the individual, to-morrow, and you will disarrange nothing—you convulse nothing—you endanger nothing:—the farmer remains just as he is, with the advantage of freedom of action and

security of tenure; the houseowner pays ground rent to the state, instead of paying a private landlord—the freehold houseowner pays a ground rent of 2*l.*, where he now pays a taxation of 20—the merchant and the shipkeeper are untouched, with the advantage of a large home trade, and no poor-rate and taxation—then your manufacturer could compete successfully with the low-taxed countries—then, at last, you would have real free trade—then strikes would be required, no combination needed, for the employers would be rich and employed be independent;—then you would have constant work, cheap food and high wages, and, in the way of all this are less than a thousand men! Ah! if fifty thousand Russians stood on your shores for an hour, you would rise in a mass and hurl them in the sea. If you have fifty thousand worse than all the Russians in the world, Norman robbers and German princes at their head, gnawing for generations at your very hearts, and do you scruple to assert your rights to them? They would not resist this confiscation. Let them call it what they like. What is their land-robbery but a confiscation in the name of law—their church-robbery but a confiscation in the name of God?—when you try to unconfiscate what they have confiscated, they raise—and let them raise—the cry of confiscation. We are not children to be frightened by names—and therefore I proclaim the nationalisation of the land, and the secularisation of the church.

Sirs, I lay down the maxim, that the land should bear the whole taxation of a country. Do not say this would be unfair or place an undue burden on the landlord. All taxation should come from real property—and the land (besides the inhabitants themselves) the only real property of a state. The farmer now pays taxation, rates, tithes and rent—then he would pay rent only; and the other classes would not encroach on their share, for—what does he pay his rent for? Out of the price he gets for the produce of the labour of his working men. The produce is bought proportionably by all, subject to the conditions I have already explained. Thus it is that, if you tax real property, you have at once a fair and equal division of the burden of taxation—an equality you can attain by no other means.

Having now shewn you the importance of political power in its two aspects, namely, in what it does in the hands of the few, and in what it might do in the hands of the many, let us proceed to consider what the form of that political power is, and what it ought to be.

I think I have now proven that it needs no miraculous intervention to secure prosperity

mong all classes, but merely a re-adjustment of existing means, which good government has an effect. An act of Parliament, like some enchanter's wand waving across the land, may transmute the ashes of your misery into gold. Not suddenly—for prosperity is a gradual growth. Like to the human body, a sick nation must recover slowly, if the cure is to be permanent. You must not do too much at once. But can you do anything? Voteless and voiceless millions!—where is the power you ought to exercise? Behold it.

VI.—THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM.

Sirs! on a previous occasion I have stated that the British Constitution was the most skillfully contrived machine to debase, degrade, and demoralise the human heart. I will make good my words.

It is a piece of clockwork, wheel within wheel, cog within cog, which takes interest after interest, class after class, section after section, and seduces each into being the enemy of all, makes each work in different ways, one cog clogs the other, one wheel pulls the other back, till the whole comes to a dead lock—and they call that—Conservatism.

A. THE HEREDITARY.—Firstly, the British Constitution separates some two or three hundred men from all others, calls them a House of Peers, and places it in their power to stop the enactment of every law that may be proposed for the people's good. For their benefit the land of an entire nation is locked up; for their benefit antiquated laws and leases are maintained; for their benefit exist army and navy, colonies and Church. The only things they share with the middle class are law and physic, because these are the only things requiring what they have not too much of—brains. They may get into debt, and cannot be arrested. They monopolise all place, pension, sinecure, and office, and the whole official machinery of the empire is in their hands. They have clearly existing an interest separate from, and hostile to, every other. Good government turns conflicting interests into harmony—our Government turns harmony into conflicting interests. Can you conceive a system more calculated to demoralise legislation?

B. THE ELECTED.—I have said the British Constitution seemed specially constructed to prevent good government, and corrupt the people. Secondly, the British Constitution takes six hundred men from the rest, calls them a House of Commons, and spreads them out like a bribing-machine for the Lords to play on,

a sort of political piano, composed of flats and sharps—one half being rogues that are bought, and the other fools that are not worth buying. It is taken exclusively from landlords and money lords. The interest of the landlord is to have land monopolised, rent high, food dear, and labour cheap. The interest of every other class but one is the reverse:—the interest of the money lord is also to have land monopolised, he desires, however, to share in the monopoly, but he wishes to have food cheap—he differs with the land lord only on that point, that he may cheapen labour, that he may reduce wages as much farther as is needed for enabling him to compete in the price of his goods with foreign manufacturers.

These men make the laws for labour. Can you conceive a system more calculated to demoralise legislation?

But this is not all: the very representation itself is split up. Lest, by any chance, the one half should move on, the other half is there to hold it back—like baker and devil, they pull different ways—and when the Commons would press to the front, the Lords push to the rear. But even this is not all: the Lords and Commons are split up among themselves. They are not only arrayed against each other, but each House is arrayed against itself, each is composed of two interests and two factions, existing in a state of mutual war. Thus you have "Her Majesty's Opposition," regarded as an organised institution of the country, with a "Leader of the Opposition," as much the recognised dictator of his side as the Prime Minister is of the other. It is said, a divided house can never stand—but here you have two divided houses, and they stand notwithstanding. The only question they unite on, is cheap labour and monopoly: attack those evils, and they are the Siamese twins of political jugglery on the instant.

C. CONDITIONS OF ELECTION.—1. THE PROPERTY QUALIFICATION.—Lest, by any chance, a representative of the shop-keeper or working man should enter the House, a special provision is made: no one having less than 600*l.* and 300*l.* per annum respectively, can be a county or borough member of the House of Commons. Thus no shopkeeper or working man can enter. You, shopkeeper and working man, are forbidden to look after your own interests. Nay! you are compelled to confide the care of them to your greatest enemies—the shopkeeper to the monopolist, the labourer to the landlord, the artisan to the capitalist; and the British Constitution calls this "Representation of the People!"

Can you conceive a system more calculated to demoralise legislation?

Sirs! what is equal representation? Not only equal constituencies—not only that so many men should be represented by so many—but that every class should be represented by men of its own order: the peer by the peer—the merchant by the merchant—the shopkeeper by the shopkeeper, the working man by the working man. That is equal representation—nothing else can be. But how can the tradesman be represented by the tradesman—the working man by the working man, if you demand that they shall have 600*l.* or 300*l.* per annum clear, in land or money? Away, then, with the obstacle; the Property Qualification for members of Parliament. It does not exist in Scotland—why then should it here? This demand has been raised again and again; is it fair and right? is it just and reasonable? Well, sirs! that is one point of the Charter. Who would not be a Chartist if that were all the Charter?

2. PAYMENT OF MEMBERS.—The British Constitution having provided such servants for you, you cannot of course expect to be very admirably served.

How do they attend to their duties? There were 198 divisions in the last session of Parliament—a session held during the most important period of England's history. How did your representatives attend to their duties in that session?

8 did not record their votes in any of the 198 divisions.

86 Members were absent 180 times and upwards.

		150	not exceeding 180	150
221	"	150	"	150
244	"	100	"	100
75	"	50	"	50
18	"	1	"	0
1	"		"	

1 Speaker.

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Thus 230 members who represent county constituencies, and 229 representing boroughs, were absent from 100 and upwards of the 198 divisions during the last session, and, as on division nights the attendance is far greater than at other times, you may glean from this how many nights your servants are absent altogether.

Take the case of London itself:

For the City of London only one member attended in forty-three, two in twenty-nine, and three in three divisions. Out of twenty-nine times that two members voted, they opposed each other on fourteen occasions. London was neutralised by absences 123, by opposition 14—total: 137 times out of the 198 divisions.

That comes from having the rich to represent you; if you complain, they tell you they are unpaid servants, and their time is their own,

or offer contemptible excuses. What would you do to your clerk or shopman if he was absent from your counting-house for 137 days out of 198? You would dismiss him in disgrace. You would discharge a man for neglecting the small affair of a shop, and you do nothing to him who neglects and ruins the mighty interests of a nation. But what right have you to complain of a voluntary unpaid servant! Can you conceive a system more calculated to demoralise legislation?

Pay your representatives, and then you will be able to control them. Then you will have a right to say: "Why were you playing last night, when you ought to have been working for me?" Then you will have a right to fetch them out of the green-room and the hell, the casino and the gambling club. You complain that Parliament does not attend to your interests, then why do you not attend to the interests of Parliament? If you expect members to serve for nothing, you are much mistaken.

Do not think you would lose money by it. If you don't pay them, they'll pay themselves, and cost you double. Now they go to Parliament as to an auction mart, only they are auctioneer and goods at the same time. They sell you and themselves by the same transaction, and pocket the money for both. Sometime they sell each other, and say to a ministry, "If you don't buy me I'll sell you." Rest assured, he who is ready to buy another, is ready to sell himself. Do you suppose those keen shrewd men, who would flay your heart to make a banknote of the skin, would spend six thousand pounds for an election, as at Greenwich if they did not expect to make twelve thousand by the transaction? Six thousand pounds in the funds would bring 180*l.* per annum; six thousand in a borough will bring a government sinecure worth a thousand a year. You have to pay for it.

Again: How can class represent class if you do not pay your representatives? The shopkeeper cannot leave his shop, the workman his work, unless you pay him for it. No universal suffrage, no ballot would help you unless each order sends its own man to Parliament—and payment of members alone enable him to go. Pay members well—and for every night they miss attending to their duties deduct so much from their wages; my word for it, they would be punctual then. No good or equal representation is possible unless you pay your members—pay your servants for the work they do, and then look after them that they do their work. Is this fair? is this right? is this reasonable? Well, sirs! this is another point of the Charter—if that were the whole Charter, who would not be a Chartist?

1. THE ELECTOR.—Now take a wider scope. Hence from the elected to the elector.—The British Constitution takes 700,000 persons from ten millions and literally tempts them to do evil. It made their interest to injure their fellow men; for the interests of the rich being monopoly and cheap labour, the interests of the poor being freedom and dear labour,—the numbers of the electors being very few,—a portion of them being very poor and a portion very rich, nobody places it in the power of the rich to intimidate, to coerce, or bribe the poor portion to vote as they, the rich, choose—just as it is the interest of the latter to legislate to the detriment of the people, our electoral system thus makes it the interest of the electors to do evil, makes it their interest to injure their fellow men—and sways them by the two great grovelling of all motives, sordid selfishness and object fear.

Can you conceive a system more calculated to corrupt a people?

1. EQUAL CONSTITUENCIES.—But it is not only the restriction of the franchise that class government has shewn its cunning and its guilt—it is also in the apportionment of the franchise among the restricted few. Do you suppose you are led by 700,000 electors? You are vastly mistaken if you do. One hundred thousand men, subject slaves, as soulless tools, as ever disgraced a country, have virtually the whole electoral power in their hands. Poor things, it is not the electors' fault. They are what they are made. Our glorious constitution has taken them and placed them in such positions, that they are bound hand and foot, as helpless as Napoleon's victims in Cayenne. They are clustered in little isolated bodies, surrounded by moneylords and landlords on all sides. They cannot have house or shop, farm or field, except by the great man's leave. Their whole existence depends on him, for the land-slave and the factory-slave dare not even deal at the shop their servant does not favor. Thus house, farm, trade, and income, are in the hands of the oligarch. Can you conceive a system more calculated to corrupt a people? Thus placed, isolated, bound, surrounded—do you call these men electors? Except in some few large constituencies, they are about as much voice in an election as the ballot box in the votes that it records. I will shew you how class government has taken the electoral body in detail, and so divided it as to place it in isolated sections prostrate at its feet. Take the following list of members and electors in twelve boroughs:

	Members		Electors.
Arundel	1	....	202
Ashburton	1	....	216

Harwich	2	....	272
Honiton	2	....	240
Dartmouth	1	....	312
Lyme Regis....	1	....	317
Evesham	2	....	352
Wells	2	....	381
Reigate	1	....	213
Totness	2	....	362
Marlborough ..	2	....	254
Thetford	2	....	210

Each of these 19 seats is returned by an average of only 124 electors.

But I will take no isolated cases; I will embrace the whole. A Parliamentary return of the number of electors in cities and boroughs in 1847, showed that in England and Wales there were—

Boroughs.	Electors.	Members.
28	350	39
48	400	68
75	600	110
100	800	158
123	1,000	184
374		559

Thus nearly the entire House is returned by 273,000 persons, and, actually, one hundred thousand electors return the majority of "your representatives." This is class representation indeed!

Talk of freedom and constitutional government after this—there is none. There is more, sirs, of electoral liberty in France itself;—I denounce the British constitution as a lie and fraud,—representation practically does not exist in England.

Keep constituencies thus unequal, and nothing can give you freedom—then, the ballot itself cannot protect you. The ballot would be a farce, where there are only 200 or 500 electors. The landlord and moneylord could sweep them all out of the borough, if his candidate were not elected. No need of bribery there—it is all dictation and command in those places.

Now, sirs, a circular is sent round to the farmer telling him which candidate he is to vote for; an agent calls on the shopkeeper, telling him who is the right man. Ask them before that for whom they will vote, and they will answer, "they have not yet made up their mind."—No! It is making up for them in the hall and mill, and when that is done, it is sent to them ready folded and docketed, to save them further trouble. There is a difference, however, between the small constituencies and the large: in the small, they are ordered how to vote—in the large, they are bought. In the large, the elector sells the seat—in the little, the seat sells him. Equal constituencies would go far to alter this. Without it fair government is impossible. Let the same number of men have the same amount of representatives; keep this unequal, and you have

class government, though you had Universal Suffrage and the Ballot to-morrow.

If the men of Thetford have a right to so many ounces of brain to represent them, the same number of men in Westminster have a right to an equal number of ounces. Taking Thetford as the standard, to be on an equality with that borough, the inhabitants of Westminster should have 2,000 representatives in the House of Commons. What say you to this system? There is a system for the British Constitution. Can you expect good government while that exists? Can there be justice or fair play? What use is there in Westminster returning a good member, if Thetford can undo his vote at any moment. If the large constituency shows a sign of independence, the little one is thrown on it, like a scorpion on the breast or a lion. Unequal constituencies are a stronghold of class government. Away with them. Let there be a fair field and no favour. No class advantage to the little boroughs. Equal rights and equal representations to all. It is the first condition of good government. Let there be equal constituencies throughout the country, and then the country will be equally represented. Is this right? Is it fair? Is it just? Well, sirs! that is just what the Charter says. If that were all the Charter, who would not be a Chartist?

2.—ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS.—Not content with having a nominal constituency of 700,000; not content with making 100,000 of this return the majority of the representation; not content with rendering that 100,000 a mere piece of machinery, not even worth a bribe; not content with preventing the tradesman's and workman's representatives from getting elected by any chance, through a heavy property qualification and a want of remuneration; not content with having a check upon all this in an hereditary house—the British Constitution provides for a long impossibility of changing your masters by the septennial clause. Parliaments are elected for seven years. The object of this is to spare expense to the rich. Bribery is costly—and the seven years law was introduced to save the pockets of your owners. Can you conceive a system more calculated to corrupt legislation? Parliaments used to be triennial. Do you know how they became septennial? Shortly after the German house came to govern this country, a Parliament that had been elected for three years suddenly passed a law declaring itself elected for seven; so that they sat four years by usurpation—and four years of every septennial Parliament has been an usurpation ever since. Triennial Parliaments are, therefore, the law of England. But business men find three years too long for keeping a bad servant. They gene-

rally prefer one year only. Mayors and aldermen, town councils and corporations, police law guardians, and overseers, vestry-men and parochial boards are elected for one year only. If it is found dangerous to elect these men, we have only the affairs of a parish to administer for more than one year—how much more dangerous is it not to elect those men for seven years who administer the affairs of a whole empire. By one year's notice you can get rid of a bad house; why then should you be seven years in getting rid of a bad man? They say annual elections would create confusion. Just order the municipal electors of Westminster to elect the churchwardens for seven years, and see what a noise they will make! Where is the confusion there? Better confusion than corruption; better the turmoil of a day than the treacherousness of seven years. Aye, aye, sirs! there would be confusion indeed,—it would be confusion to class interests and bad government. But annual Parliaments are the very things to prevent confusion at elections. When is confusion most likely to exist? When you bottle up intrigues and heart burnings of seven years and pour them out at once, or when the safe valve of annual election lets out the virus before it has grown dangerous and strong? No! Let the brooms sweep clean—then always have new members. They tell you with annual Parliaments men would not know how to govern. What? then, do we send men who do not know how? If they have not learnt before they go into Parliament, they will never learn after they have entered. We want men who know their business before they undertake it—not novices who learn it afterwards and make us pay for their schooling. But, sirs! annual Parliaments are the main instrument for preventing bribery, corruption, and coercion in the House and out of it. Give the member only one year's lease of power, and governmental bribery would become rather a costly job, when every year the bribe had to be paid afresh. You could hardly more effectually prevent the bribery of members. Give the member only one year's lease of power, and he would be rather careful how he voted, while every twelve months he had to stand before his constituents, and render an account of how he voted. Now members can brave you with impunity, because they are secure of a seven years lease of power—and if they never become re-elected, their votes for that long term are worth so much to Government, that they can get a heavy price for them in the auctioneers' mart of Saint Stephen. Give the member only one year's lease of power, and you diminish the power of the Minister. Now, if the House is refractory, he threatens dissolution, and

same at once. Make elections annual, the threat has lost its force for ever. But it is outside the House where annual Parliaments are doubly indispensable. Bribery and corruption can never be effectually checked without that measure. It costs 6,000*l* to be re-elected for Greenwich. Once in seven years the rich men could afford that—none could, if they had to pay it every year. The price of seats would fall—one step towards reform. Combine this with a repeal of the Property Qualification, with payment of members, and with equal constituencies—piece after piece of armour stripped off the body of misrule—and soon a mighty change would be seen in the constitution of the government. Annual Parliaments are indispensable for purity of election and representation. This the middle classes—this the municipalities have shewn. If it is indispensable for a parish, it must be doubly needed for an empire. Is this right? Is it fair, is it just? Well, sirs, this is just what the Charter says. These four points were all the Charter, who could not be a Chartist?

3. THE BALLOT.—The convict in the prison kept beneath the gaoler's eye, so is the elected convict in the political prison called a constituency, beneath the eye of his rich warder. He cannot escape. He has not even got the alternative of not voting at all. Poor slave! if he votes for the Tory, he loses his Whig customer—if he votes for the Whig he loses his Tory trade; if he votes for neither, he loses both. The eye of the taskmaster is on him, and he cries for some screen to hide him—for some shield to hold before his body. Sirs! the electors are at the peril of his life. After each election bankruptcies and insolvencies follow among the shopkeepers; after each election a batch of workmen out of work troop to the workhouse or jail, driven by destitution. The proud right of free Briton is exercised in trembling and abject fear—for death itself—the death of hunger is the penalty for the exercise of that free Briton's right. Can you conceive a system more calculated to corrupt a people? To give you an instance, I will quote from the "*Morning Post*" a letter from Mr. Somers, candidate for London. He says,

"An elector of this town had the manliness to vote for me at the last election, in opposition to his landlord Mr. Winn. As a punishment, he was ejected under the Petty Sessions Act, though he had paid his rent to the day; but, as he was a weekly tenant, this humane statute enabled his landlord to dispossess him.

"His wife was, at the time, on a sick bed; and he was removed, notwithstanding the assurance of a medical man, Doctor Toker (whose certificate to that effect was, as I have been informed,

sent to Mr. Winn), that her life would be endangered by the removal, and the woman died. This plain truth requires no comment—I shall add none. It can be proved; and I cannot for a moment doubt that you will give it publicity.

"I beg to add that this is only one of many instances in which the same mode of proceeding has been adopted against those tenants of Mr. Winn who voted for me at the last election."

Would this murder have been perpetrated, if the electors had enjoyed the ballot? Yes, it would, unless with that ballot you gave large constituencies, and annual parliaments. But of this I shall speak more. At any rate, we are both in favour of the ballot. Is it just? Is it fair, is it right? If that were all the Charter, who would not be a Chartist?

4. UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE.—Now, sirs, I come to the greatest, the most important point: how do you expect to get reform? From the present constituency? That is impossible—they are not strong enough, or not good enough, or they would have obtained it already. They want help—you must give them more power—those hundred thousand slaves, who return the majority of the House, swamp the remainder—you must therefore bring in some more soldiers—in other words—you must extend the franchise.

How far shall you extend it?

If you have ten men to bribe, you can do it easily. Go on! It is more difficult with twenty.—Go on—with thirty it is harder still. The bribery costs more, or the price of the vote grows cheaper. Go on!—with forty your purse will reach a still less distance. Go on!—with fifty the bribe becomes so low, that positively it is scarcely worth your while to sell your vote. Go on! With sixty your voice becomes so cheap, that you can really gain more by using it to return a good representative, than by selling it to return a bad one. Go on! go on! the further you extend the franchise, the further you fly from corruption—the nearer you approach to purity. Go on! Even the Ballot will not screen a small constituency—but a large one can defend itself. Go on! you can intimidate the few: the more there are, the less you can intimidate. Go on! good government is the greatest possible good to the greatest possible number: who looks best after a man's interests? who but the man himself? Which plan, then, secures the greatest possible good to the greatest possible number? That in which the greatest possible number look after their own interests. Universal suffrage! The vote for every man.

But the franchise has its limits—limits assigned by nature and by sense. What limit would you place upon the franchise? Years. You would exclude the unformed mind—none under ages should

vote. But this is just what the Charter says. What limit would you place upon the franchise? Sense. None of unsound brain should vote. But this is just what the Charter says. What limit would you place upon the franchise? Honesty.—No criminal should vote. But this is just what the Charter says.

Then who says anything against the Charter?

Such is the document you have heard reviled. That is the "People's Charter."

V.—THE REIGN OF TERROR.

But some are afraid to grant the suffrage to every man of sound mind, not undergoing punishment for crime. Afraid to grant what is not their's to give? "Who made them their brother's keepers?" Show me the pact, law, covenant, or deed by which a people freely gave away its rights? and, if it had, one generation cannot sell the birthright of another. Who gave away my vote—in past or present? On what pretence or plea? I never sanctioned it. Did I sell it? Show me the consideration? Is it good government? No government could be more vile. Is it money? The voteless are the poorest. Give me at least the mess of pottage for my birthright. But I never signed it away—I never sold it—I never gave it—and nothing has been given me in lieu of it. Your class government is piracy, and your laws are usurpation. If, in law, a man makes a contract in my name, without my authority, I am not bound by it. No more are you bound by laws that others make without your sanction. There is, therefore, not a law in England that is lawful, and not one that those who have no vote are bound to obey.

But what are you afraid of? Oh! the "working classes are not fit to be entrusted with the franchise." Who, I ask, are entrusted with it now? Saints, sirs! patterns of honesty and virtue. Your British elector is the noblest specimen of human dignity. It is true we are told, most men have their price. With some it is a pound, with some it is a million. With some it is power, with others it is glory—but ordinary British electors can be had for a pot of beer. At a recent election one hundred of them stood at the market cross, waiting to be purchased, but no purchaser came. "Have us for a pound!" they cried, but electors were a drug, and no one would pay. "Give us ten shillings,"—but the candidate was still too virtuous. "Give us a pot all round!" The bargain was struck, and a representative of British freedom was returned to Parliament. Esau sold his own birthright for some broth, but these men, for some beer, will sell the

birthright of a people. Oh! British electors are disinterested citizens. I have known a pound note given for a yard of ribbon—and at Halifax ten pounds were paid for a black. They will sell the dearest interests of a people over their counters, as coolly as I would sell a pennyworth of oatmeal. Formerly you had to pay a penalty for injuring an individual, but now you get a reward for ruining a people. Oh! the British elector is a gallant fellow. I have seen him run out of town when an election was coming, as though the Russians were marching down the hills. He is so brave that his own vote has frightened him. Have you ever been at an election hunt? I have. It is good sport. The fox is nothing to me. I have known one sturdy patriot promise a vote to the Tory, the Whig, and to me. On polling day he was not to be found. He thought such a sterling patriot, that none of us could do without him. The Tories sent a carriage and pair after him—the Whigs the same, and so did we. Well, sirs! we three of us, by invitation, ransacked his house—his wife wished us to do so—to show that really was not there. The Tories had the hunt, and could not find him. The Whigs were hunted next, and could not find him either. I happened to arrive last, and I found him lying hid under a heap of dirty clothes, whereon he jumped up, bolted off, dashed across the fields, and took cover under some brushwood among the Yorkshire hills. The Whigs, sirs, was your trustee—that was the key of his country's rights.

Tell me after that you are afraid to entrust the franchise to the people! Afraid? The franchise is in the vilest hands out of the whole community. To such men you give the vote while you deny it to that noble honest one that builds and holds the greatness of this country, and throws the cloak of its nobility around the meanness of your institutions. The Tories of reform while such persons form the bulk of the constituency of England? As well try to build palaces of marble out of heaps of mud. Your system gives the vote to the thing created—property, and denies it to the creator—man. It gives the vote to the brothel, and denies it to the study of the sage. It gives the vote to the house, the perishable casing, and denies it to the eternal spirit that breathes within the walls.

Afraid of the people? Sirs! from the people has arisen every blessing you have—glory that surrounds the nation's front; from the shoe that cases your foot, to the road on which your chariot rolls, to the law by which humanity progresses. Every reform in religion, in medicine, in war, in letters,

ade, in agriculture, in taxation, has been forced on you reluctantly, by the people. It rose from the bosom of the working classes, as the spring wells upward from the depths of earth, and as that spring forces its soft way through the hard rocks, so through the barrier of class prejudice and class oppression the pure river of opinion won its path. But, mark! when even compelled to pass a wholesome law, you rich men, sole possessors of all power, have realised and crushed its agency.

Afraid to grant the franchise to the people? I tell you,—be afraid to keep it from them, for they will not bear to be misruled much longer.

VI.—INSTALMENTS.

The rich feel this—they feel their growing weakness, and, therefore, on the one hand, they are organising armed encampments in the country, on the other hand, talking of instalments of the franchise.

Sirs! we have been pronounced impracticable politicians, because we have been accused of rejecting all instalments. I, for one, would not reject any instalment that truly added to the power of the people; but I repudiate all instalments that in reality take power from us, while pretending to confer it. Such have been all the instalments offered us as yet.

I stated on a previous occasion that every measure short of the Charter was a step further from it, instead of nearer to it. I will prove this.

The rich are standing siege in corruption castle—the garrison is small, the walls are mouldering, and the assailants without are numerous and strong.

What would you say, if a castle were besieged, and one fine morning a portion of the assailants were let in, and turned into a part of the defenders? A glorious chance for the besiegers there! Such is the instalment that they offer.

Do you know what a thief does, when he is caught in the act of stealing? He says: "Go snacks! and let us rob together." That is what these instalment-mongers do. They are thieves, who have stolen the birthright of the people; but they are found out, convicted in the act, and now they find they cannot have it longer all to themselves, they try to give up as little as possible to the smallest number, and say to some of those who are detecting them: "Come join us in the booty, and help us to keep the remainder off!" A glorious system that instalment plan! There is one thief now, but that would give us two thieves for the one.

I, too, will take instalments—but they must be of the proper sort. No instalment based

on property, or taxes, or houses. The rich have the franchise now—and any such qualification does but add to the wealthy element, while it excludes the poor. It completes the edifice of class legislation. Add a million to the electors by any extension of a property clause, and you are further from the Charter, and not nearer, for it is not a million of the poorest, but a million more of the richest you thus add. Much chance then for the poor to get their rights!

There is one instalment above all others against which I warn you: it is that of the ballot. I am not opposed to the ballot when combined with the other five points of the Charter, because I believe that then, if not beneficial, it would at any rate not be injurious, and that is the most that can be said for it; but, I warn you, that the ballot with the present system, or any modification of it short of universal suffrage, would place the crown upon its power and iniquity. Now, at least, the people's eye is on the constituency. Remove it, and class impunity has been achieved.

Remember—there are more non-electors than electors—more rich electors than poor ones—more electors whose interests are hostile to the people than of those whose interests are on the people's side. Whom, then, would the ballot screen? The poor against the rich? No! the rich against the poor. The electors may tell you they would vote for you if they had the ballot: the vast majority would not. They would vote against you twice as much as now, for now you still hold them in fear a little, as you can tell which way they vote. If they meant honestly, or if they were not cowardly slaves, they would vote for you now. One effort would break their fetters and your own. They might be turned out of house and home; but the Parliament they could turn in by a single vote, would soon turn them back again. They are, therefore, either knaves, or cowardly groveling slaves—and such men are not to be trusted with so terrible, so vital a power, as the right of secretly voting away your property, your hopes, your liberty, your life. No! no!—no ballot for them without a vote for us. They talk of the ballot to protect the workman's rights; give him the rights to protect, and he won't want the ballot.

Depend on it, a people that requires the ballot to protect it, no ballot can protect. An act of Parliament can no more make a man brave than it can make him religious. If the spirit of independence is not within a people, rely on it, no artificial contrivance can give it them. The ballot may be well enough, as a part of the Charter; by itself it would be the crowning iniquity of our infamous electoral system.

Oppose it, working men! it would be the death-blow to your hopes of freedom.

I know at what penalty I speak these words. I expect to be in Parliament ere long. But in Nottingham, the borough that I shall contest, the ballot men are strong. These words endanger my return. Nevertheless, they are true and I care not. I look for something higher than a solitary seat in a class-house among corruption.

VII.—ATTAINMENT.

Before you is the truth. Our fourth evening is well nigh spent—and above the plaudits of this multitude I hear one question soar: "The evils are such as you describe them—the Charter is right and just, but how shall we attain it?"

How? Are you men, and not ashamed to ask that question?

The little stream that trickled from the sandy knoll, had a long way before it to the distant sea. Desert and precipice, plain and mountain, spread along the path it must traverse. "You will never reach the ocean," said the stagnant pool beside it. But it tried, and it flowed on. The sun was hot, the sand was dry,

and sucked its crystal waters; but from a source of perseverance and its well of faith it poured the little stream, and it flowed on. At last its waters spread in sheltered hollows, and drew tributary streams towards its breast—and it flowed on. Soon, it gathered in its volume and became a river; deeper and deeper, wider and wider, faster and faster—till mountains could not stop it, and it heard the distant sea with a shout of exultation that called it far afar. Then all its waters rose, and all its currents ran; woe then to bridge or dyke, rock or rampart, that should oppose its path, in calm and unchecked majesty the broad tide the glorious river reached the sea.

So the river of opinion comes, a streamlet from the lips of truth—the sandy shoals of apathy and the hard rocks of prejudice on every side—but it flows towards the bosom of the people, that mighty ocean that upbears the hopes of man—it spreads, it deepens, and grows more wide; numbers gather upon numbers, thousands crowd upon thousands till millions flow in one resistless stream—and the victory of opinion is achieved.

Once win the people, they'll win all the rest. They need no telling, and they want no marshals.

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